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# Cooking for One or Two

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University of Illinois  
at Urbana-Champaign  
College of Agriculture  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Circular 1314

## Overview

There's nothing unusual about eating alone. Teenagers do it after sports practice; parents do it when they're kept late at work; single persons of all ages may eat solo almost every day. What they eat is often less than ideal because

- People don't want to go to all the trouble of cooking healthful meals for only one person.
- Cooking small quantities may be difficult, and we don't like to eat leftovers for a week.
- Busy schedules don't leave time for planning, shopping, and cooking.
- Some of us don't know how to plan and cook.
- It's not much fun to eat alone.

Bureau of Census figures indicate that single-person households in this country have increased at almost twice the rate for all households during the past 25 years. Someone now lives alone in more than one in five of all U.S. households.

Food has different meanings to different people:

- It is satisfying hunger.
- It is meeting nutritional requirements.
- It is a reward for a job well done.
- It is a reminder of home when we're away.
- It is a return to security.
- It is a way of escape from stressful daily events.
- It is a way to show others you care.

We eat for many reasons besides the obvious ones of satisfying hunger and supplying our body with the nutrients it needs. However, the way in which we choose to meet those basic needs is affected by the other meanings that food has for each of us.

## 1. Planning and Nutritional Needs

### Nutritional Needs

Many of us grew up eating three meals a day that were composed of some more or less specific types of foods. Changes in our lifestyles may make eating three meals a day less desirable. Many of us are on the go. We eat on the way to school or work, eat lunch out, and try to grab something late in the day to keep the hunger pangs at bay while we study, socialize, exercise, or just do other things that are more fun than kitchen chores.

The traditional three-meal-a-day pattern did have some advantages. It structured our eating patterns and helped us to include some of each of the food categories we needed for maintaining health.

That is not to say we can't choose nutritious foods in proper amounts on a less structured plan. It just takes a little more awareness on our part, and sometimes a modest dose of self-discipline. The guidelines using the **Basic Four + One** food groups will help you plan menus that provide the nutrients our bodies need to function properly.

Think about foods as falling to one of **four basic** groups (vegetable/fruit group, bread/cereal group, milk/cheese group, and meat/poultry/fish/beans group) or into the **plus one** group, which includes high-energy (high calorie), low-nutrient-density foods, such as candy, salad dressings, and some snack foods. A good diet is a wise selection from the basic four, reserving the plus one foods for use in small amounts to add variety and interest to your diet.

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## Planning Meals for One or Two

Each of us has some sort of eating pattern. It may be nontraditional, but it is a pattern. Whether we eat three meals a day or six mini-meals, we are more likely to provide for our nutritional needs, satisfy our aesthetic and social needs, and stay within our budgets if we plan meals in advance.

It is also a more efficient use of time to plan meals (or anything else that requires some organized effort on our part) in advance. Planning saves trips to the grocery store, money you might spend on impulse purchases, and anxiety over what to cook for dinner.

### Planning Meals

1. Plan meals or menus for a week at a time—plans can always be changed.

Keep in mind

- Nutritional needs
- Your schedule

2. Plan ahead for use of whole packages.

- Make several main dishes from one cut of meat
- Consider how to make use of leftovers:

Intact for another meal, or  
As an ingredient for another main dish

- Subdivide and save (freeze perishables and repackage nonperishables for later use)

3. Planning meals

- Plan in this order: main course, potato, vegetable, salad, bread, and dessert
- Or, plan main courses for the number of days you will eat at home, then be sure to have on hand the same *number* of servings of

vegetables, bread, etc. You can mix and match side dishes as the week progresses.

4. Always have an alternate plan or an emergency shelf to pick up the slack if you forget to plan, or if things suddenly change (for example, your office picnic is rained out).

5. Prevent *boring meals*

- Buy a cookbook. When you're bored, pick out something new
- Invite a friend to dinner
- Have a potluck dinner
- Try a new produce item
- Set the table
- Start a recipe file and/or a menu file
- Try an ethnic food once a week
- Buy a deli main dish
- Try blender meals based on milk with fruit, ice cream, or chocolate, etc. added (do not add raw eggs)

## Basic Four + One

1. Vegetable/Fruit Group

- Four servings ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 1 medium-size fruit or vegetable) per day
- One serving of citrus fruit every day
- One dark green or yellow vegetable every other day
- Supplies: vitamin A, vitamin C, minerals, and fiber
- Includes: dried fruits, fruit taffy, banana and apple chips, and common fruits and vegetables

2. Bread/Cereal Group

- Six to ten servings per day (1 slice of bread,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooked cereal or pasta)
- Includes: whole grain products and products made from "enriched flour"
- Supplies: B vitamins, iron, and fiber
- Includes: bread, cereal, pasta, tortillas, rice, pancakes, muffins, waffles, pita bread, pizza crust, and canned biscuits

3. Milk/Cheese Group

- Adults need 2 servings per day (a serving is based on an amount equivalent to 8 ounces of milk):
  - 1 cup plain yogurt
  - $1\frac{1}{4}$  ounce cheddar or Swiss cheese
  - 2 ounces processed cheese

$1\frac{1}{2}$  cups ice cream

2 cups cottage cheese

- Supplies: calcium and other minerals, protein, and vitamin A

4. Meat/Poultry/Fish/Beans Group

- Two servings per day
- Serving size is
  - 2 to 3 ounces of lean cooked meat
  - 1 egg = 1 ounce lean meat
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooked dry beans, peas, or lentils = 1 ounce lean meat
  - 2 tablespoons peanut butter = 1 ounce lean meat
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup nuts or sesame seeds = 1 ounce lean meat
- Supplies: iron and other minerals, vitamins B12 and B6, and protein
- Includes: pizza topping, taco filling, and beef jerky

5. Fats/Sweets/Alcohol Group

- Amounts consumed depend on amount of *calories* required
- Supplies: calories and fat
- Includes: butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, candy, jams, syrups, soft drinks, wine, beer, and liquor



## Planning Meals Activity

1. Plan the *main course* for dinners for two people for five days.
2. Add one prepared or packaged food product to each menu.
3. Add other side dishes to complete the menu (salad, bread, and dessert).

	Main course	Prepared or packaged product	Side dish
Monday	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Tuesday	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Wednesday	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Thursday	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Friday	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

6. Once you have a general meal plan for the week, decide what you'll need.
  - Make a list of recipe ingredients
  - Consolidate all amounts of a given ingredient so you know the total quantity you will need for the week (for example, how much flour you will need for spice cake, pancakes, and cookies).
  - See what you already have on hand.
  - Make a list of what you need to get at the store. Include standard items that you use every week (eggs, milk, bread).
  - Make a note of what amounts you need.
7. Consider your budget
  - Have a general idea of how much you can afford to spend *per day* for food.
  - Plan one-third of your daily expenditures for meat (main dish).
  - Make substitutions if necessary to stay within your budget.
  - Check newspaper ads for super-market specials (Wednesday paper) and clip any coupons you want to use. You may want to modify your plans after you see what is on sale.

## Food Prices

Almond extract	1 oz	1.15	Eggs, 1 dozen, large	1 doz	1.10	Pancake syrup	24 oz	1.05
American cheese	1 lb	2.91	Evaporated milk	12 oz	0.67	Peaches	1 lb	1.39
Applesauce	16 oz	0.68	Flour, all-purpose	5 lb	0.93	Peaches, freestone	16 oz	0.89
Bacon	1 lb	2.20	Fruit cocktail	16 oz	0.76	Peanut butter	18 oz	2.39
Baking soda	16 oz	0.39	Gelatin/32 env.	1 pkg	3.81	Pears	16 oz	0.94
Baking powder	7 oz	1.09	Grape jelly	32 oz	1.39	Peas, fresh	16 oz	0.51
Bananas	1 lb	0.49	Grapes	1 lb	1.49	Peas, frozen	10 oz	0.74
Bbq sauce	18 oz	1.19	Grated Parmesan cheese	8 oz	3.10	Pineapple, can	20 oz	0.99
Beef liver	1 lb	1.67	Green beans, can	16 oz	0.47	Pineapple, fresh	1 ea	2.99
Beets, whole	16 oz	0.56	Green beans, fresh	1 lb	1.09	Pork & beans	1 lb	0.37
Biscuit mix	40 oz	1.59	Green beans, frozen	10 oz	1.28	Pork chops	1 lb	2.19
Biscuits/10	8 oz	0.39	Green peppers	1 lb	0.89	Pork loin roast	1 lb	2.29
Boullion	2.25 oz	0.93	Ground beef, 80% lean	1 lb	2.39	Pork steak	1 lb	1.68
Bread, white	1 lb	0.99	Ham slice	1 lb	2.69	Potato chips	8 oz	1.08
Bread, whole wheat	1 lb	1.29	Hamburger buns/8	12 oz	0.94	Potatoes, white	1 lb	0.59
Broccoli	1 lb	1.19	Honey	1 lb	1.46	Powdered sugar	2 lb	1.18
Broccoli, chopped frozen	10 oz	0.60	Hot dog buns/8	12 oz	0.94	Prunes	1 lb	2.18
Brown rice	16 oz	0.89	Ice cream	2 qt	2.59	Pumpkin	15 oz	0.73
Brown sugar	2 lb	1.18	Instant pudding mix	4 oz	0.57	Raisins	15 oz	2.39
Butter	1 lb	2.09	Instant coffee	8 oz	4.69	Red delicious apples	1 lb	0.99
Butternut squash	1 lb	0.59	Instant rice	14 oz	1.35	Round steak	1 lb	3.08
Cabbage	1 lb	0.37	Instant tea	20 oz	2.13	Rump roast	1 lb	3.89
Cake flour	2 lb	1.61	Jello	3 oz	0.49	Sage	0.43 oz	1.05
Cake mix/1 layer	1 pkg	0.54	Kidney beans	16 oz	0.39	Salmon, pink	16 oz	2.20
Carrots	1 lb	0.53	Lard	1 lb	0.89	Salt	16 oz	0.45
Carrots	16 oz	0.62	Lemonade concentrate	12 oz	0.59	Saltines	1 lb	1.59
Catsup	32 oz	1.57	Lemons	1 ea	0.59	Seasoned salt	3 oz	0.91
Cauliflower	1 lb	1.59	Lentils	1 lb	0.69	Sherbet	1 qt	1.42
Cauliflower	10 oz	0.99	Lettuce, iceberg	1 head	0.89	Shortening, store brand	3 lb	2.03
Celery	1 bunch	0.99	Lima beans	1 lb	0.67	Sirloin steak	1 lb	3.09
Celery salt	3 oz	1.43	Long grain rice	1 lb	1.17	Skim milk	1 qt	0.79
Cheddar cheese, med. sharp	1 lb	4.95	Macaroni	1 lb	0.89	Sour cream	16 oz	1.45
Chicken, cut-up	1 lb	1.39	Mackerel	15 oz	0.85	Sour pie cherries	16 oz	1.31
Chicken, whole	1 lb	1.09	Margarine	1 lb	0.54	Spaghetti	1 lb	0.97
Chili powder	1.37 oz	1.79	Mayonnaise	16 oz	1.48	Spinach	1 lb	1.59
Chocolate chips	12 oz	1.89	Milk, 2%	1 qt	0.85	Split peas	1 lb	0.54
Chuck roast	1 lb	1.89	Milk, from powder	1 qt	0.46	Sugar, white	5 lb	1.79
Cinnamon, ground	1.87 oz	2.95	Milk, swtnd. condensed	14 oz	1.84	Sweet corn/3 ears	1 pkg	1.00
Cloves, ground	1.25 oz	1.35	Milk, whole	1 qt	0.93	Swiss cheese	1 lb	6.68
Cocoa	8 oz	1.99	Minute tapioca	8 oz	1.89	Teabags/100	1 pkg	2.99
Cocoa, instant (6 serv)	1 pkg	0.99	Mixed vegetables	10 oz	0.69	Tomato paste	6 oz	0.39
Corn syrup	16 oz	0.99	Molasses	12 oz	1.89	Tomato sauce	8 oz	0.44
Corn, can	16 oz	0.48	Mozzarella	1 lb	3.29	Tomato soup	10.75 oz	0.39
Corn, frozen	10 oz	0.79	Mushrooms, can	4 oz	0.88	Tomatoes, can	1 lb	0.82
Cornmeal	24 oz	0.99	Mushrooms, fresh	10 oz	1.59	Tomatoes, fresh	1 lb	0.99
Cornstarch	16 oz	0.69	Mustard	9 oz	0.68	Tuna, flake	7 oz	0.79
Cottage cheese	16 oz	1.16	Noodles	1 lb	0.89	Vanilla	1 oz	1.29
Cream cheese	8 oz	1.05	Nutmeg	1.37 oz	1.57	Vinegar, cider	32 oz	0.75
Cream of celery soup	10.75 oz	0.52	Oatmeal	24 oz	1.85	Weiners	1 lb	2.08
Cream of mushroom soup	10.75 oz	0.69	Oil, store brand	48 oz	1.87	Whipping cream	1 qt	3.59
Cream of wheat	28 oz	2.28	Onion salt	3 oz	1.39	Worcestershire sauce	10 oz	0.89
Cucumbers	1 ea	0.49	Orange juice concentrate	16 oz	1.59	Yeast	3 pkg	0.89
Dates	8 oz	2.29	Oranges, navel	1 ea	0.53	Yellow onions	1 lb	0.59
Dill weed	0.62 oz	2.09	Oregano, ground	1 oz	2.53	Yogurt	8 oz	0.71
Dry mustard	1.12 oz	0.95						

## Meal Planning with a Budget Activity

1. Plan one dinner for two people. The couple's weekly food budget totals \$100 for all three meals a day for both people. Limit your expenditure for meat (or meat substitute) to one-third of the cost for a meal.

$$\frac{\text{amount of money in food budget}}{(\text{number of meals}) \times (\text{number of people})} = \text{amount you can spend per person per meal}$$

example:

$$\frac{\$100 \text{ per week food budget}}{(21 \text{ meals per week}) \times (2 \text{ people})} = \$2.38 \text{ per person per meal}$$

Trying to limit your expenditure for meat (or meat substitute) to one-third of the cost of a meal, you can calculate how much you can afford to spend for one serving of meat:

example:

$$\frac{1}{3} \times \$2.38 = \$0.79 \text{ for one serving of meat for each meal}$$

If you don't usually eat meat (or a substitute) for breakfast, you can use the meat allowance from breakfast at another meal:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{breakfast allowance} \quad \$0.79 \\ \text{supper allowance} \quad + \$0.79 \\ \hline \text{for one serving of meat for supper} \quad \$1.58 \end{array}$$

Then you can calculate whether you can afford to purchase salmon steak which sells for \$5.29 per pound (1 pound serves four) or T-bone steak which sells for \$4.99 per pound (1 pound serves three because of the loss of bone).

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \$5.29 \text{ per pound} \div 4 \text{ servings per pound} & = & \$1.32 \text{ per serving} \\ \$4.99 \text{ per pound} \div 3 \text{ servings per pound} & = & \$1.66 \text{ per serving} \end{array}$$

### Will this fit in my budget?

You and your spouse have a food budget of \$125 per week. Rib roast is on sale for \$6.25 per pound, and one pound will yield two servings. Can you serve rib roast and stay within your budget?

$$\frac{\text{amount of money in food budget}}{(\text{number of meals per week}) \times (\text{number of people})} = \text{amount you can spend per person per meal}$$

$$\frac{(\quad)}{(\quad) \times (\quad)} = \$\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$(\text{one-third of budget for meat}) \times (\text{amount you can spend per person per meal}) = (\text{amount you can spend on meat per person per meal})$$

$$(\text{one-third}) \times (\quad) = \$\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\frac{(\text{price per pound of meat})}{(\text{number of servings per pound})} = (\text{cost per serving})$$

$$\frac{(\quad)}{(\quad) \times (\quad)} = \$\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2. Look through the grocery store ads and make a substitution using either a sale product or a coupon special (for example, brownie mix for chocolate cake mix).
3. Plan a similar menu using a large cut of meat (chuck roast, turkey, etc.) or a recipe that makes enough for several meals (lasagna, homemade vegetable soup). Plan on using leftovers for another meal (state what you'll use them in) and tell how the leftovers should be stored (made up into the next main dish, frozen as individual dinners, etc.). Calculate the approximate cost for these meals all made from one recipe or meat cut.

## 2. Shopping, Storing, Leftovers, Freezing Extras, Cutting Down Recipes

### Food Shopping for One

If you live alone, you probably have problems when shopping for food. You try to buy economically. You also want a variety of convenient foods that are easy to prepare, but you find these are usually higher priced. If you see a bargain and buy more of the product than you can use for one or two meals, you risk wasting food or having the same monotonous meal day after day.

Here are some helpful hints on shopping:

1. Keep a running list of things you need to buy and staples you're out of.
2. Shop during the week or during the day when stores are less crowded.
3. Take your list (and coupons) with you.
4. Comparison shop.
  - Try different stores until you find one that has the items you like at the best price.
  - Compare brands (name brands, store brands, generic brands).
  - Compare container size:
    - 1) the larger size saves you no money if you throw some out;
    - 2) smaller sizes allow for more variety.
  - Consider whether you can or want to repack large quantities into more useful amounts.
5. Consider substituting money for skill and time.
  - Buy powdered gravy mix.
  - Buy cake mixes.
  - Buy frozen pies or desserts.
  - Buy a gourmet entree.
  - Buy instant (oatmeal, rice, soup).

6. Read labels
  - Know what is in the product.
  - Know how many servings the container holds.
  - Compare cost per serving for various types of products so you can make an informed choice regarding what you're paying for.
7. Buy the quality that is appropriate for your intended use:
  - Food grades reflect quality, not nutritional content.

- Fresh vs. frozen vs. canned. Generally, *fresh* is more expensive than *frozen*, which is more expensive than *canned*. Seasonal foods such as green peppers, broccoli, and strawberries will vary depending on the time of the year. You don't necessarily need to buy perfect fresh peaches to make a peach cobbler, but fresh broccoli (rather than frozen) may be required for a fresh vegetable salad.

### Substituting Money for Time and Skill Activity

1. List five food products that substitute money for time:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. List five food products that substitute money for skill:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are the homemade foods comparable in quality to the prepared products?

4. Are the homemade foods comparable in nutritional value to the prepared products?

5. What would be some good reasons for purchasing prepared products instead of making them from scratch? Are there instances when the prepared products would be cheaper than the homemade version (consider the leftover ingredients you might have from the homemade product—do you have a way to use or keep them)?



8. Ask to have large food packages split. For example, the butcher often can split up a family pack of pork chops; or eggs can be purchased by the half dozen. The price may be slightly higher, but you are less likely to throw out spoiled food.

## Store Food Properly

Proper storage of food makes the difference in whether you'll be able to use it or lose it. Many grocery items just aren't available in single-serving sizes, so if you can't use the whole thing at once, you will be forced to repackage and store it. Don't buy more than you can store and use in a reasonable length of time. Twenty-five pounds of rice is not really a bargain if you throw out twenty pounds of it!

Plastic bags with "zipper locks" can be used for almost anything.

Small plastic containers should be see-through so you don't forget what you have.

### Repackaging

- Meat: individual patties, legs, thighs, fish fillets can be repackaged and then frozen. Wrap individual servings in heavy-duty aluminum foil and freeze; then thaw when ready to use and cook in the same foil (saves on cleanup).
- Half packages of muffin, brownie, or cake mixes can be saved in a plastic food bag or plastic container (remember to put directions in the container).
- Cheese: refrigerate or freeze.
- Buy egg substitutes and freeze them (fresh whole eggs don't freeze well).
- Use small plastic containers with permanent labels for things you frequently repackage (canned spaghetti sauce)

### Preparing food for another meal

- Casseroles: subdivide before baking and put into small cassouettes.
- Make homemade TV dinners in microwavable plastic trays that go from freezer to microwave.

- Soups and chili: freeze in a plastic bowl. When frozen, remove from bowl and place in a plastic food bag (easier to stack).

Most foods, even those we think of as shelf-stable, keep longer in the refrigerator. If it takes you a long time to use up 1 pound of coffee, 5 pounds of flour, or a box of raisins, refrigerate them.

### Food safety

- Keep hot foods hot (above 140°F) and cold foods cold (below 40°F).
- Never leave refrigerated foods out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.
- Use refrigerated cooked meat, gravy, fish, poultry, etc. within 4 days of cooking.
- If you defrost frozen food in the microwave, it should be cooked immediately.
- Thaw meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Store cooked meat and combination dishes in the freezer no longer than 3 months.

## Reading Labels Activity

From the labels on the following pages, how many servings are in the package, how much is allowed per serving, and what is the cost per serving? Do you think this is more or less expensive than making the same product from scratch?

	Cost	Number of servings	Cost per serving
1. Canned vegetable soup	_____	_____	_____
2. Chocolate cake mix	_____	_____	_____
3. Bottled salad dressing	_____	_____	_____
4. Frozen TV dinner	_____	_____	_____
5. Canned Chinese dinner	_____	_____	_____

# CHEF'S BEST

price 48c



net wt 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> oz.  
(304 g)

*Condensed Vegetable  
with Beef Stock Soup*

Directions: To the contents of  
1 can of water and heat..

Ingredients: Beef stock, tomatoes, water, carrots, potatoes, peas, macaroni, corn, potato starch, green beans, barley, soybean oil, salt, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, monosodium glutamate, disodium inosinate.

Distributed by Chef's Best, Urbana, IL

## Nutrition Information per Serving

Serving size ..... 4 oz  
Servings/container . 2  
Calories ..... 80  
Protein ..... 3 grams  
Total carbohydrates 12 grams

Simple sugars ..... 3 grams  
Complex carbohydrates ..... 9 grams  
Fat ..... 2 grams  
Sodium ..... 750 mg  
Potassium ..... 200 mg

## Percentage of U.S. RDA

Protein ..... 4  
Riboflavin ..... 2  
Vitamin A ..... 50  
Niacin ..... 4

Vitamin C .....  
Calcium ..... 4  
Thiamine ..... 10  
Iron ..... 10

# Quick and Taster TV Dinner

Directions: Preheat oven to 425°F. Remove dinner from box. Peel back foil over apple pudding. Heat for 25 minutes.

Ingredients: water, apples, chicken, potato flakes, carrots, peas, food starch, soybean oil, salt, seasonings, BHA, citric acid.

Taste Meals Inc., Urbana, IL

## Nutrition Information per Serving

Servings per container ..... 1  
Calories ..... 926  
Protein ..... 20 g  
Carbohydrate ..... 90 g  
Fat ..... 55 g  
Cholesterol ..... 92 mg  
Sodium ..... 650 mg

# Sweet T Devils Food Cake



net wt. 18.25 oz (517g)



Price \$2.29

# Smooth'n Creamy Red Wine and Vinegar Dressing

Non  
Fat



16 Fl. oz. (1 pint)

Shake well  
Refrigerate After Opening

**Ingredients:**  
water, red wine vinegar, sugar, salt,  
dried onion, natural flavor, xanthan gum,  
sodium alginate, modified food starch, calcium  
disodium EDTA, artificial color.

**Nutrition Information per Serving:**  
Serving size ..... 1 Tbsp  
Servings per bottle ..... 32  
Calories ..... 6  
Protein ..... 0 grams  
Carbohydrate ..... 1 gram  
Fat ..... 0 grams  
Cholesterol ..... 0 grams  
Sodium ..... 190 mg

Contains less than 2% U.S. RDA of  
protein, vitamins A, C, thiamin, niacin,  
riboflavin, calcium and iron  
Smooth'n Creamy Consumer  
Products, Urbana, IL

# reat Mix



## Sweet Treat Devils Food Cake Mix

**Add to mix:**  
1½ cups water  
½ cup vegetable oil  
3 eggs  
Beat 2 min. on "high".  
Pour batter into greased,  
floured 8" pans.  
Bake 35 min at 350°F.

**Ingredients:** sugar, bleached enriched flour, cocoa,  
dextrose, hydrogenated soybean oil, BHA, BHT,  
tapioca starch, baking powder, mono-and di-  
glycerides, salt, artificial flavor, guar gum, lecithin,  
artificial flavor.

The Sweet Treat Co., Urbana, IL

**Nutrition Information per Serving:**  
Serving size: ..... 3" square  
..... (½ cake)  
Servings per container ..... mix for 12  
Calories ..... 270  
Protein ..... 4 g  
Fat ..... 15 g  
Carbohydrate ..... 32 g  
Sodium ..... 330 mg  
Potassium ..... 180 mg

**Percentage of U.S. RDA**  
Protein ..... 6  
Vitamin A .....  
Vitamin C .....  
Thiamin (B₁) ..... 6  
Riboflavin (B₂) ..... 4  
Niacin ..... 4  
Calcium ..... 10  
Iron ..... 6

Price 89 ¢

# Quick Lunch In A Cup

Price \$1.19

## Noodles and Beef

**Directions:** Fill cup with water. Microwave  
on "High" for 90 seconds

Net wt. 2 oz

**Ingredients:** Enriched wheat flour,  
partially hydrogenated vegetable oil,  
dehydrated beef, guar gum, sodium  
tripoly phosphate, BHT.

The Quick Lunch People, Urbana, IL

**Nutrition Information per Serving**  
Serving size approx ..... 10 oz prepared  
Serving per package ..... 1  
Calories per serving ..... 240  
Protein ..... 15 grams  
Carbohydrate ..... 25 g  
Fat ..... 9 g  
Sodium ..... 910 mg

## Lunch In A Cup

## Speaking of Freezing . . .

Freezing is a good way to preserve surplus ingredients for later use. You can also freeze some of what you prepare today to use for another meal so you won't have to eat the same leftovers 5 days in a row.

Foods that cannot be used rapidly enough to prevent spoilage or deterioration can be frozen. These include

- Egg whites (freeze individually in ice cube trays)
- Flour, biscuit or muffin mixes (partial packages)
- Meat (repackage into one-meal portions before freezing)
- Partial cans of frozen fruit juice concentrate
- Dairy products (grated cheese, butter-milk, fluid milk)
- Bread, buns, bagels
- Fresh melon and strawberries (eat partially frozen)
- Partial cans of soup, spaghetti sauce (in labeled plastic containers)

Cooked foods can be frozen in single-serving portions for later reheating in the microwave. For example,

- Casseroles
- Soups and chili
- Muffins, cakes, and cookies
- Pastry shells (unbaked)
- Pies (meat or fruit pies)
- Cooked meat (beef, turkey, chicken, pork)
- Spaghetti sauce
- Pancakes, waffles (wrap individually)
- Cooked vegetables
- Bread or roll dough (keep only 2 weeks)

To preserve the quality of frozen food, follow these suggestions for preparation.

1. Cool cooked foods quickly. Subdivide food into smaller portions so it will lose heat rapidly. Package food for freezing as soon as you can handle it.
2. Package carefully. Use small see-through plastic freezer containers, good quality plastic wrap or freezer bags. Be careful of glass jars—expansion of water in foods can cause them to crack.

3. Maintain frozen food at the proper temperature (0°F in the home freezer).
4. Don't store too long—use 6 weeks as a rule of thumb. Many foods can be frozen longer than that, but if you don't mark the containers you'll probably forget what is in the package in 6 weeks!
5. Prepare frozen food carefully for serving. Do not thaw more than several hours in advance of a meal. If you have a microwave, defrost and reheat right before serving. Otherwise, thaw food in the refrigerator.

## Shopping Ideas

1. Try dry spice or seasoning packets (chili, taco). Use one-half package.
2. Individually wrapped cheese slices keep better.
3. Small bottles of several kinds of salad dressing give more variety.
4. Buy prepared sauces (sweet and sour, tartar).
5. Buy fruit juice in individual cans or small frozen concentrate (6 ounce) cans.
6. Recipes mean large eggs, so buy only large eggs.
7. Buy frozen vegetables—cook one serving at a time.
8. Buy fresh fruit by the piece rather than by the bag.
9. Don't buy specialty ingredients if plain will do. For example, buy all-purpose flour instead of self-rising flour.
10. Skim milk doesn't keep well. If you want very low fat milk, use nonfat dry milk (or mix it with whole milk).
11. Buy lean ground meat (15 percent fat). It keeps longer in the freezer.
12. Buy spice mixes (Italian seasoning, pumpkin pie spice, lemon pepper).
13. Buy variety packs of lunchmeat, dry cereal, chips, and yogurt.
14. Individual serving sizes allow take-along items for lunches and snacks (applesauce, puddings, cheese, and crackers).
15. Shop in the same store because it's easier to locate things.
16. Never shop when you're hungry!
17. Do your primary shopping once a week. The fewer times you go to the store, the less you will be tempted to purchase extras.
18. Be wary of sale items. If you buy a 20-pound turkey because it's 39 cents a pound, you may be eating it for 3 months!
19. Try commercially prepared eggnog or chocolate milk as a source of calcium. (Don't make homemade eggnog with raw eggs!)
20. Fruits and vegetables often are delivered on Tuesday to be in stock for the Wednesday food ads. Plan your shopping to coincide with advertised specials and the freshest produce.

## Leftovers

Very little needs to be said about leftovers. Either you like them or you don't. If you like them, save them. There are many how-to hints in the newspapers, as well as numerous books on the subject. If you don't like them, dispose of them in a way that doesn't insult your sense of economics or general philosophy about wastefulness.

- Throw them in the garbage immediately after the meal.
- Save them in the refrigerator until they turn green, *then* throw them in the garbage.
- Take them to work or school for quick lunches.
- Repackage and freeze immediately.



# Suggested Maximum Freezer Storage for Selected Foods

Food	Holding time in months at 0 degrees F	Food	Holding time in months at 0 degrees F	Food	Holding time in months at 0 degrees F
<b>Fruits &amp; Vegetables</b>		<b>Meat</b>		Cooked chicken and turkey:	
Fruits and berries	12	Beef:		dinner pies (sliced meat and gravy)	6
Fruit juice concentrates	12	hamburger or chipped (thin) steaks	4	fried chicken and dinners	4
Vegetables	8	roasts and steaks	12	<b>Fish and Shellfish</b>	
<b>Baked Goods</b>		Lamb:		Fish fillets:	
Bread and yeast rolls:		patties (ground meat)	4	cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, pollack	6
cinnamon rolls	2	roasts	8	mullet, ocean perch, sea trout, striped bass	3
white bread	3	Pork, cured	2	Pacific Ocean perch	2
plain rolls	3	Pork, fresh:		salmon steaks	2
Cakes:		sausage	2	sea trout, dressed	3
angel (chiffon)	2	chops	4	striped bass, dressed	3
chocolate layer	4	roasts	8	whiting, drawn	4
vellow	6	Veal		Shellfish:	
pound	6	cutlets, chops, and roasts	9	clams, shucked	3
fruit	12	Cooked meat:		crabmeat:	
Danish pastry	3	meat dinners (pies)	3	dungeness	3
Doughnuts	3	<b>Poultry</b>		king	10
Pies (unbaked)	8	Chicken:		oysters, shucked	4
<b>Precooked Foods</b>		cut-up	9	shrimp	12
Combination dishes (stews, casseroles, etc.)	4-8	whole	12	<b>Frozen desserts</b>	
Potatoes:		Duck, whole	6	Ice cream	1
French fried	4-8	Goose, whole	6		
scalloped	1	Turkey:			
Soups	4-6	cut-up	6		
Sandwiches	2	whole	12		

From: "Home Care of Purchased Frozen Foods." U.S. Department of Agriculture

## Foods That Do Not Freeze Well

Foods	Usual form	Condition after thawing
Cabbage*, celery, cress, cucumbers*, endive, lettuce, parsley, radishes	As raw salad	Limp, water-logged, quickly develops oxidized color, aroma, and flavor
Irish potatoes, baked or broiled	In soups, salads, sauces, or with butter	Soft, crumbly, water-logged, mealy
Cooked macaroni, spaghetti, or rice	When frozen alone for later use	Mushy, tastes warmed over
Egg whites, cooked	In salads, creamed foods, sandwiches, sauces, gravy, or desserts	Soft, tough, rubbery, spongy
Meringue	In desserts	Toughens
Icings made from egg whites	Cakes, cookies	Frothy, weep
Cream or custard fillings	Pies, baked goods	Separates, watery, lumpy
Milk sauces	For casseroles or gravies	May curdle or separate
Sour cream	As topping, in salads	Separates, watery
Cheese or crumb toppings	On casseroles	Soggy
Mayonnaise or salad dressing	On sandwiches (not in salads)	Separates
Gelatin	In salads or desserts	Weep
Fruit jelly	Sandwiches	May soak bread
Fried foods	All except French fried potatoes and onion rings	Lose crispness, become soggy

**Spices and Flavorings:** Pepper, cloves, and synthetic vanilla get strong and bitter. Onion changes flavor during freezing. Celery seasons become strong. Curry may develop a musty off-flavor. Salt loses flavor and increases rancidity of any item containing fat.

\*Cucumbers and cabbage can be frozen as marinated products such as "freezer slaw" or "freezer pickles." These do not have the texture of regular slaw or pickles.



## Saving Leftovers Safely Activity

State the appropriate packaging, storage method, and approximate storage time for the following leftovers:

	Packaging method	Storage method	Storage time
1. Turkey and dressing	_____	_____	_____
2. Pot roast and gravy	_____	_____	_____
3. Mixed vegetables	_____	_____	_____
4. Cherry pie	_____	_____	_____
5. Creamed spinach	_____	_____	_____
6. Homemade chili	_____	_____	_____
7. Cheese enchiladas	_____	_____	_____
8. Tuna noodle casserole	_____	_____	_____
9. Stir-fried pork and vegetables	_____	_____	_____
10. Fried chicken	_____	_____	_____

## Cutting Down Recipes

Remember, before you do anything to or with a recipe, *read the recipe first*. Some recipes that make enough to serve four, six, or eight can be cut down, others cannot.

Recipes are difficult to cut down if

1. They contain a portion-controlled commodity (for example, an egg) which is difficult to divide into smaller units.
2. They contain very little cooking liquid. Reducing the amount may result in liquid evaporation before cooking is complete.
3. They contain many ingredients in small amounts.
4. They are baked products and there is no baking container that is small enough to give the same amount of surface area proportional to volume as the original recipe.

It is easy to cut a muffin recipe in half: the muffins will be the same size, but there will be fewer of them. It is harder to cut a banana bread recipe in half. It gives you half as much batter, but the problem is to find a smaller size pan that will give the same surface-to-volume proportion as the original, full-size recipe.

In reduced recipes, seasonings and cooking times cannot always be accurately determined. Adjustments may be necessary during the preparation process. Be conservative on spices—you can always add more. Cut down cooking times, but check frequently for doneness.

Make notations on the recipes of changes you had to make.

## Useful Techniques for Small Quantities

1. Broiling is quick and easy. Use it for meat, fish, and poultry.
2. Stir-frying is last minute and fast. You can cut up the food the night before; and it's a good way to use up leftovers.
3. Reheat heat-sealed bags of food in boiling water.
4. Barbecuing on a small outdoor grill is both relaxing and a change of pace. It provides an ideal social setting involving a meal.
5. Waffles and sandwiches in a waffle maker are hot, hearty, and fast on a cold evening, especially when you can't fight off the hungries long enough to prepare a more complicated meal.
6. Saving leftovers or repackaging meat in aluminum foil in single servings and then heating them up in the foil saves preparation *and* clean-up time.

### 3. Getting Organized, Microwaving, and Stocking the Shelves

#### Getting Organized

Like any other job, cooking requires some organization. Certain tools of the trade are almost indispensable! And some things just make doing the job less hassle and more fun. Use the list below to begin stocking your kitchen.

##### Required

1. 1-quart and 2-quart covered sauce pans
2. 8-inch covered skillet
3. Large pot (for spaghetti, chili, etc.)
4. 1 quart and 2 quart ovenproof glass or pyroceram bakeware (for mixing and casseroles)
5. Measuring spoons and cup(s)
6. Wooden mixing spoons and whisk, spatula, sharp knife
7. Cookie sheet, small (8-inch) cake pan, small (6-inch) pie tin
8. Can opener with bottle cap opener on one end
9. Potato peeler
10. Grater (for cheese)
11. Colander or large strainer (for spaghetti, noodles)
12. Potholders

##### Optional

1. Microwave oven
2. Coffee pot
3. Small waffle maker
4. 1 quart crock pot
5. Plastic bag heat sealer
6. Electric mixer
7. Toaster
8. Tea kettle
9. Rolling pin
10. Muffin pan

#### Speaking of Microwave . . .

The microwave oven has revolutionized cooking for 90 percent of all American households. In the last five years, a microwave oven has become affordable for even the most modest budgets. Microwave cooking has several advantages:

- It saves time
- It saves energy
- It saves labor
- It preserves nutritional value and quality of food
- It allows maximum use of convenience foods

Inside the microwave oven is a magnetron tube that converts electrical energy into electromagnetic energy, sending microwaves into the oven cavity. When microwaves come in contact with a substance, they are either absorbed, reflected, or transferred. Microwaves are absorbed directly into food, attracted by fat, sugar, and water molecules. These molecules begin to vibrate, and the friction generates heat that rapidly cooks the food. Cooking takes place starting from just under the outside edges and moving to the center of the food.

#### Microwave Cookware

The perfect container for use in the microwave should have tolerance for low and high temperatures, be inexpensive, and be made of a material that allows the microwaves to pass through it.

##### Safe microwave cookware

- Paper
- Some plastics can be used with low fat and low sugar foods
- Some glass (ovenproof glass or pyroceram bakeware)

##### Unsafe microwave cookware

- Metal or metal trimmed glassware (Aluminum foil and TV dinner trays are an exception in some microwave ovens; see manufacturer's recommendations.)
- Soft plastics (High fat and high sugar foods can get hot enough to melt plastic wrap and blister soft plastic.)
- Glass with lead in it or metallic trim on it
- Stoneware with lead glazes (It will heat up and burn you.)

#### Small Quantity Cooking Methods Activities

List five cooking methods that would be useful for one or two and give the special pieces of equipment required.

Cooking method	Equipment
1. _____	_____
_____	_____
2. _____	_____
_____	_____
3. _____	_____
_____	_____
4. _____	_____
_____	_____
5. _____	_____
_____	_____



Use plastic bags, plastic food wrap, and aluminum foil with care. Be careful of twist ties on bread packages because they contain a metal wire that will get hot and may ignite the paper twist tie. Un-punctured plastic bags or wraps will explode if water in the food turns to steam and expands rapidly. Some plastics will melt and adhere to hot foods.

To test any glass, pottery, or china utensil, put a cup of water in it and place it in the oven. Microwave on “high” for 30–45 seconds. If the utensil feels hot when taken from the oven, it is unsuitable for use in a microwave.

## Successful Microwave Methods

1. Don't overdo it. To avoid overcooking, check food at a minimum time, then continue cooking if necessary. Think time — not temperature and not appearance.
2. Even heating. Uniform cooking and defrosting of foods is essential, but food is rarely uniform in shape, size, or density.
  - Arrange items in a ring. Place slow-to-heat, dense, or thick items near the edge, thinner items at the middle.
  - Stir foods such as soups and sauces to redistribute cool portions to the outside where food cooks faster.
  - Rotate the dish when it isn't practical to stir.
  - Turn over dense pieces of food (meat, potatoes)  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the cooking period.
  - Let food stand a few minutes before serving to allow heat at the outside to penetrate to the inside.
  - Don't overload the oven. Three groups of two items will heat faster than one group of six items.
3. Cover up. Covers, whether glass or wax paper, hold in heat and speed heating. Remove covers carefully to avoid getting burned from trapped steam.
4. Thinner foods cook quicker—spread food out.
5. Use large utensils for casseroles because they bubble up.
6. Putting a paper or plastic wrap tent over meat will keep it juicy.
7. Be sure to slit plastic wraps and plastic cooking pouches before using them to allow excess steam to escape.
8. Use only thermometers designed for microwave ovens.

## Microwave Usage Activity

Describe the appropriate way to microwave the following foods, including what kind of container to use, how to arrange the food, and what power level to use (defrost, low, medium, high).

	Container	Arrangement	Power level
1. Heat leftover turkey dressing	_____	_____	_____
2. Cook raw broccoli	_____	_____	_____
3. Heat up a piece of apple pie	_____	_____	_____
4. Heat water for tea	_____	_____	_____
5. Warm up leftover sliced roast beef (to at least 165°F)	_____	_____	_____
6. Cook a whole chicken (to 185°F)	_____	_____	_____
7. Heat baked beans (to 165°F)	_____	_____	_____
8. Heat leftover spaghetti, meat sauce, garlic bread (to 165°F)	_____	_____	_____
9. Cook bacon	_____	_____	_____
10. Cook oatmeal	_____	_____	_____

## Alternatives to Eating Alone

Eating alone is one of the biggest deterrents to cooking and eating well, from both a nutritional and a food-quality standpoint. Planning some social eating into your schedule may be the best motivation to plan and eat well. Making meals more special by increasing the social aspects provides motivation to plan interesting, attractive, and nutritious menus. Try these suggestions:

1. Have a standing dinner date at your place with a friend or a neighbor.
2. Eat lunch in a cafeteria at work or at school. If this serves as the big meal of the day, it will lighten your food-related work at home.
3. Organize social activities around regular meals
  - Lunch with a friend
  - Brown-bag seminars
  - Potluck supper clubs
  - Church dinners
  - International or gourmet food clubs
4. Volunteer to help others who eat alone and who may need some help, such as the Meals-on-Wheels program for the elderly, a single parent in your neighborhood or church, or a handicapped person who cannot do all the chores required in food shopping and preparation.

## For Further Information

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## *Staples to Keep on Hand*

1. Chocolate and/or cocoa
2. Coffee
3. Evaporated milk
4. Flour
5. Ketchup
6. Mayonnaise
7. Mustard
8. Cooking oil
9. Parmesan cheese
10. Raisins
11. Rice
12. Salt
13. Saltines
14. Shortening
15. Sugar (granulated, powdered, and brown)
16. Tea
17. Tomato paste and/or sauce
18. Vinegar
19. Spices: garlic salt, pepper, allspice, celery salt, cinnamon, cloves, chili powder

20. Herbs: basil, chive, dill, instant minced onion, oregano or Italian seasoning, sage
21. Soups: cream soups for casseroles, others for lunch
22. Pasta: spaghetti, macaroni, noodles
23. Dry beans, rice
24. Popcorn

## *Perishables to Buy Weekly*

1. Bacon
2. Bread, bagels, and muffins
3. Margarine
4. Cheese
5. Eggs
6. Fruit: citrus and others
7. Milk
8. Meat
9. Vegetables: tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and green/yellow peppers

## *Emergency Shelf*

1. Evaporated milk
2. Soups (instant or canned)
3. Canned tuna, chicken, and salmon
4. Saltines
5. Tea bags
6. Canned main dishes: Chinese dinner, beef stew, etc.
7. Macaroni and cheese
8. Canned spaghetti sauce
9. Peanut butter
10. Canned pudding or fruit
11. Dry orange drink mix
12. Jam or jelly
13. Single serving cans of vegetables, pork and beans, etc.
14. Instant rice mixes
15. Pizza mix
16. Nonfat dry milk

## *Table of Equivalents*

1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons

$\frac{1}{8}$  cup = 2 tablespoons

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup = 4 tablespoons

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup = 5 tablespoons = 15 teaspoons

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup = 8 tablespoons

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup = 10 tablespoons = 30 teaspoons

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup = 12 tablespoons

1 cup = 16 tablespoons

1 cup = 8 fluid ounces (not weight, but volume)

1 pint = 2 cups

1 quart = 4 cups

1 gallon = 4 quarts

1 pound = 16 ounces

1 pound granulated sugar = 2 cups

1 pound powdered sugar =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups

1 pound brown sugar =  $2\frac{2}{3}$  cups

1 pound sifted flour = 4 cups

1 pound butter or margarine = 4 sticks

1 stick margarine =  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup = 8 tablespoons

Garlic: 1 medium clove =  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon garlic powder

Herbs: 1 tablespoon = 1 teaspoon dried







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